

**CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF SONORA  
AUGUST 7, 2017**

A Regular Meeting of the City Council of the City of Sonora was held this date in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 94 North Washington Street, at 5:00 p.m. The following members were present: Mayor Connie Williams, Mayor Pro-Tem Jim Garaventa, Councilmembers Matt Hawkins, Mark Plummer, George Segarini; City Administrator Tim Miller, City Clerk Marijane Cassinetto, Administrative Services Director Jennifer Callaway, City Attorney Douglas White, Fire Chief Aimee New (present at 5:10 p.m.), Acting Police Chief Turu VanderWiel (present at 5:08 p.m.). Absent: Interim City Engineer Gerard Fuccillo and Community Development Director Rachelle Kellogg.

**CITY CLERK'S REPORT ON POSTING OF AGENDA**

City Clerk Cassinetto advised Council that at Noon on the 4th day of August, 2017, the Agenda for the City of Sonora Council Meeting scheduled for this date was posted outside City Hall for public view.

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

No changes.

**PRESENTATIONS**

None

**PUBLIC COMMENT (Non-Agenda)**

None

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**MOTION** by Councilmember Hawkins, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa, that the Consent Calendar be approved as follows:

- 1. Approval of the Council Minutes for the Closed and Regular Session Meetings of July 17, 2017;**
- 2. Approval to pay invoices for previously budgeted expenses on August 8, 2017, in the amount of \$293,390.87; and**
- 3. Approval of disbursements in the amount of \$212,154.60 on July 21, 2017, and \$150,196.33 on August 4, 2017, for payroll, inclusive of employee salaries, employer and employee taxes and retirement contributions, and miscellaneous voluntary employee deductions. There was no public comment, and the Motion passed unanimously.**

**PUBLIC HEARINGS**

None

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None

## NEW BUSINESS

**Appointment to Marijuana Working Group.** The Council considered appointing Dale Baxter to the Marijuana Working Group. Administrator Miller reported that prior applicant Dale Baxter was still interested in serving, and he attended the Marijuana Working Group Meeting held on July 26, 2017, as a member of the audience. Mayor Williams recommended approval. There was no public comment. **MOTION by Councilmember Segarini, second by Councilmember Plummer, and unanimously carried that the Mayor's recommendation be confirmed and Mr. Baxter be appointed to serve as the Public Member on said Working Group.**

**Establishment of Homeless Task Force.** The Council considered establishing a Homeless Task Force. Administrator Miller reported that the item was placed on the Agenda at the direction by the Council at its last Meeting. Miller stated that should the Council decide to move forward, suggestions from Staff have been set forth in the Staff Report. It was Council consensus to proceed. The Mayor asked for public comment.

**Chuck Kiel** was in favor of a Task Force and suggested that Hazel Mitchell be appointed as the homeless advocate. He said that a homeless camp should be set up on the City owned property on the southwest end of Sonora with the City setting an example and "just doing it". He volunteered to be on the Task Force. **Mary Lynn Ashburn** was in favor of a Task Force; she said that she has 20 years experience in human resources and has studied what other communities do. She is trying to find point in time numbers to help qualify for available resources, noting that the problem must first be identified in size and makeup and then apply resources. She volunteered to be on the Task Force. **Arthur Schmidt**, owner of the Grocery Outlet, thinks that the Task Force should solve the issues in downtown Sonora first and move outward from there because business owners are having problems. He said that transients and people who do not want a home and want freebies are the ones causing the problems and should be focused on first. He is in favor of a Task Force.

**Carolyn Travels** said that she was involved in Hayward's homeless program. She said she had a dream that the homeless shelter was located in a vacated school and suggested that a shelter be placed in the Dome. She said that the homeless need to be helped to at least get them out of the winter and worst weather, and that her idea is that a program would be funded by the faith community and private sources. She is interested in helping.

**Rona Doring** said that she has assembled many materials on projects and one in particular in Modesto which is making much progress. She would love to be on the Task Force. **Shelly Munez** said there is a great need and is glad to see a Task Force formed. She would love to help with solutions with the many issues that need to be addressed, and thanked the City for its time and consideration to form the Task Force. **Jeanette Lambert** founder of the David Lambert Drop In Center said that mental health is a big issue and must be addressed. She would like to see smaller advisory groups to bring ideas and suggestions to the Task Force, and suggested that there be two homeless representatives on the Force. **John Banky** said that the open door policy for transients coming into town needs to be stopped, and that he wants to see citizens support the homeless and help them, but the open door policy is using up City and County resources which it needs for its citizens. **Barbara Farkas** stated that there are families that are homeless, not just transients, and that a Task Force should be a coalition of people who are willing to work on a problem and offer solutions, and Vision Sonora should be incorporated into the program; that everyone needs to work on problem solving as a community coalition.

With no further public comment, the Mayor asked for Council input. Councilmember Segarini noted the different categories of homeless that he heard, gave unemployment statistics, stated that there are jobs available for those who want to work, but to find a dependable ethical worker is difficult; he is hesitant about the City giving, giving, giving without a good plan in place, and that the Task Force has a huge job ahead of it. Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa stated that he is in favor of a Task Force and would like to be on it. He agreed with Jeanette Lambert's suggestions to have advisory groups and homeless representation of some kind. He said that there would be many issues with the Dome especially the ADA requirements, and that it is next to Cassina High School; that issues need to be identified first with the Task Force without preconceived ideas; that the ones causing the problems need to be dealt with, and it is important to not make everybody a transient. Councilmember Plummer asked for clarification as to the term transient. Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa responded in reference to words spoken earlier by Arthur Schmidt that connoted transients are folks that are more loitering downtown than those out in the field and want to get back on their feet. Councilmember Plummer said that we cannot solve all the problems especially mental health; we have to work on dealing with the interface between people we cannot control and those whose civil rights we want to protect, and where we can also not be prejudice in favor of somebody because they are homeless if they are causing public safety issues

including fires. He said that when we weigh public safety with the people in our community who invest their lives, their businesses, their work and everything, we need to look out for our community members who are contributing first. He said that we can probably solve the interface between businesses and the loitering people who are employed and not homeless, but who act and look homeless and are treated as homeless as an identifier. He stated concern about the enormous numbers of big hearted generous people in our community and in our churches which may be exasperating the problem. He would like to see less people defined by the term homeless; that churches do not make it so attractive, but make it so they can report percentages going down, and would like to see less and less people defined by that term. He feels that we are going to make it more attractive and easier and easier by this whole approach in getting grant money, or church money or private money and thinks it will exasperate the problem more than solve it; that we need to look for solutions that will give us fewer.

Councilmember Hawkins said his places of employment have allowed him to see all sides, and that he sees huge underlying problems not just with mental health, but with serious drug use including heroine, methamphetamines and alcohol. He has issues with offering free housing, and stated that many of us may have gotten a hand up, but have still worked for what we have; he has mixed feelings, but feels if we offer a hand up in some way, especially if it is not going to cost the City much, then everyone benefits. He wants to be on the Task Force because he can see all sides. Mayor Williams noted that point in time numbers are available at the City because it does an annual survey. She would like to see a Task Force and that it is necessary to come up with definition, direction and solutions. She also likes having advisory groups with homeless representation. She said that she had recently spoken to a former homeless man who reached out to her to tell his story. He told her about his family life growing up and his getting involved with drugs, but said he fortunately had a case worker who was able to allow him to realize that he could turn his life around. He stated to her, "I think homelessness is an addiction, just like alcohol and drug abuse".

Chuck Keil interrupted the Mayor's comments, then left the Chambers. Mayor Williams reiterated that she is not saying homelessness is an addiction, that is what the man said. Williams asked the Council if it was for or against a Task Force. It was the consensus of the Council that it was in favor. Administrator Miller reviewed the procedural process. Mayor Williams confirmed that the Council's desire to proceed and noted Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa and Councilmembers Hawkins and

Plummers' interest to serve on the Task Force. After discussion, it was the recommendation of the Mayor to appoint Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa and Councilmember Hawkins to serve with Councilmember Plummer as alternate, and also suggested that advisory groups supply additional information to Task Force Members. Administrator Miller reviewed the typical application process which provides for notices in the newspaper and posting on the City webpage, discussed the timeframe, and stated that applications could come back to the Council for the Mayor's recommendations on September 5, 2017.

**MOTION by Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa, second by Councilmember Segarini that the following parameters for formation of the Task Force be approved as follows:**

Number of Members: 7

Composition of Members:

- Two Councilmembers: Jim Garaventa, Matt Hawkins
- One Alternate Councilmember: Mark Plummer
- Homeless Advocate
- Agency Provider
- Charitable Organization Provider
- Public Member
- Business Member

Appointment Process:

- Typical Application per City Administrator review
- Mayor Recommendation
- Council Confirmation

The Mayor asked for additional public comment. Jeanette Lambert asked for clarification as to the composition of the members. Mayor Williams clarified. A member of the public said she wanted to see more than one public member on the Task Force, and someone from the homeless. The Mayor responded that there would be advisory committees with a homeless representative. The member of the public responded that there should be a homeless person on the Task Force. A member of the public said that food service jobs do not provide a living. Another member of the public who is a restaurant owner said that many restaurant workers make good salaries. The City Attorney informed the speaker that comments can only be directed to the Council and must pertain to the actual agenda item.

There was no further comment. The above **MOTION passed unanimously.**

**Annuitant Agreements.** The Council considered authorizing the City Administrator to execute Annuitant Agreements for Police Services with the following:

- a. Dennis Townsend
- b. Gordon Winningham
- c. Howard Glenn Roberts

Recommending authorization, Administrator Miller introduced the matter reporting that the annuitant services are necessary due to staffing vacancies and shortages. Administrative Services Director Callaway reviewed the Agreements noting that the following adjustments need to be made: (1) change the hourly base rate for Dennis Townsend from \$26.54 to \$27.85, and (2) change the hourly base rate for Gordon Winningham from \$26.52 to \$29.24.

There was no public comment. **MOTION by Mayor Pro-Tem Garaventa, second by Councilmember Hawkins, and unanimously carried that the hourly base rates be adjusted as presented above, and that the Administrator be authorized to execute the Annuitant Agreements on behalf of the City.**

#### **MONTHLY REPORTS**

None - No public comment.

#### **VISION SONORA COMMITTEE REPORT**

None - No public comment.

#### **COMMUNICATIONS**

None - No public comment.

#### **COUNCILMEMBER/DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORTS**

**Fire Chief New** thanked all who came out for *Magic of the Night* and purchased food from the Fire Department booth, thanked Sheala Wilkinson for the great job coordinating the event, and thanked the Firefighters who cooked. New reported that Sonora crews were sent out on both the Jacksonville and Twist Fires and came back without injury, that the Department participated in the California Championship hand pumper competition in Angels Camp on August 5, 2017, for which she will provide photos at a later date, and that the Fire Department has been awarded a SAFER Grant and a Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant which will come before the Council at a future Meeting. **Acting Police Chief VanderWiel** reported that *Coffee With a Cop* went very well, that the *Annual National Night Out* event was very well attended and very successful, and that the Department has received recognition from the Tuolumne County Breast Feeding Coalition for its employee breast feeding facility established earlier this year. **City Clerk Cassinetti** noted that she attended *Magic of the Night*, and that it was great with a large attendance.

**Councilmember Segarini** reported that he attended the Merchant/Townhall Meeting on July 26, 2017, that the next Meeting will be on August 23, 2017, at 8:00 a.m. in the Council Chambers which the public is always invited to for their input as well, and that he attended *Magic of the Night* which was a great event and complimented Sheala Wilkinson for great coordination. **Mayor Williams** noted that she attended the Heart Rock Café dinner put on by Christian Heights Church; attended *Coffee with a Cop*; went to Sacramento with ATCAA to attend a meeting with two of the Amador County Board of Supervisors and representatives from the Fishes and Loaves Program to hear what they are doing with the homeless situation in their area; attended Sierra Repertory Theater's farewell celebration for Sarah and Dennis Jones and presented them with a Proclamation from the Council; attended National Night Out; attended *Magic of the Night* which was a great event and had a record setting crowd; and mentioned the August/September edition of the new Sierra Living Magazine originating out of Sacramento which has a great story about Sonora in it.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the Regular Session Meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m. to the next Regular Session Meeting on Monday, August 21, 2017, at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

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Marijane Cassinetto, City Clerk      Date